

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Eckhard H. Kuesters (Registration No. 28,870) on April 27, 2005. The application has been amended as follows:

In the claims:

Claim 1, line 4, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 1, line 6, replace "portions;" with --portions, and calculating a widthwise dimension of the reference pattern from the edge points;--

Claim 1, line 12, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 1, line 12, replace "said edge points" with --said edge points of the pattern under inspection--

Claim 1, line 13, after "with respect to" delete "the"

Claim 1, line 15, replace "said edge points" with --said edge points of the pattern under inspection--

Claim 12, line 12, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 12, line 18, replace "the pattern" with --a pattern--

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

- 1 1. (Currently Amended) A size checking method comprising:
- 2 a first step of reading image data on a reference pattern and recognizing an edge
- 3 direction of the reference pattern on the basis of pixel values detected at edge portions which
- 4 are end portions as viewed in the width direction of the reference pattern;
- 5 a second step of detecting edge points corresponding to the end portions as sub-pixels
- 6 on the basis of the pixel values detected at the edge portions;
- 7 a third step of acquiring image data on a pattern under inspection;
- 8 a fourth step of ~~reading the image data on the pattern under inspection and~~
- 9 ~~calculating a widthwise dimension of the pattern under inspection, from edge portions located~~
- 10 ~~at the same position as the edge portion whose widthwise dimension is calculated by use of~~
- 11 ~~the reference pattern]~~ detecting edge points at each of edge portions which are end portions as
- 12 viewed in the width direction of the pattern under inspection, said edge points being detected
- with respect to the edge portions located at the same position as the edge portions whose
- widthwise dimension is calculated by use of the reference pattern, and of calculating the
- widthwise dimension of the pattern under inspection, with the edge points as starting points;
- [[and]]
- a fifth step of determining whether or not the pattern under inspection is defective on
- the basis of the widthwise dimension of the reference pattern and the widthwise dimension of
- the pattern under inspection;
- a sixth step of preparing a frequency distribution with respect to a dimensional error
- obtained on the basis of the widthwise dimension of the reference pattern and the widthwise
- dimension of the pattern under inspection, and varying a threshold value used in the second
- step when the edge points are detected as sub-pixels;
- said fifth step including,